

**Agriculture Committee Testimony**  
**HR 4, March 26, 2013**  
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Mr. Chairman and Representatives, my name is Bill Hallinan. H A L L I N A N. I am here in two roles. I promise not to take twice as long.

For the record, I am submitting a copy of this testimony, the text of the Forest Jobs and Recreation Act (FJRA), facts and figures on Wilderness in Montana, Page E1 of the Sunday, March 24, 2013 edition of the Helena Independent Record highlighting new markets for timber products, and my briefly and informally marked up copy of HR 4 highlighting its serious omissions and flaws.

First: I am here as the president of the Wild Divide Chapter, one of six state chapters, of the Montana Wilderness Association (MWA). You may know MWA is the oldest grassroots Wilderness Association in the United States and perhaps in the world. We started in 1958. Statewide we have 5,000+ members. On behalf of the 500+ families in in our Chapter who live in and around Lewis and Clark County, we oppose HR 4. Please table HR 4 in committee.

Now, I am now speaking for myself, not MWA or the Wild Divide Chapter. It is Easter week, and I was not sure if HR 4 was some sort of divine resurrection, so I had to come to the tomb to see it in person. And behold FJRA believers and doubters! And I see angels, the committee staffers!

I have lots to say about the HR 4 process I think the Committee would find very interesting, but I'll skip that. It is included at the end of my written testimony. Anyway, my process comments boil down to one question. **How does moving HR 4 from the State Agriculture Committee to the floor of the State House benefit Montana agriculture?** Now, if I were in our national congressional delegation, and it doesn't matter who or what party, and a State House committee moved against my national legislation. Well, I would hope they had a darn good reason and not just to satisfy the ego of a freshman legislator.

Let's move on to the reason I am here, to see the body, the content, of HR 4. In short, HR 4 is a "whereas" of imprecision, falsehoods, and unsubstantiated claims. Please read the details in my written comments. I will spend no more time discussing it.

Instead, I will praise FJRA. Why?

- 1) 72% of Montanans support FJRA.
- 2) Tester ran on FJRA, he advertised FJRA, and he won carrying FJRA.
- 3) The majority of major newspapers in Montana have endorsed FJRA, multiple times. In contrast, the Helena IR and Bozeman Chronicle have publically asked Representative White to stop grinding his FJRA axe on legislative time.
- 4) FJRA puts people to work.
- 5) FJRA brings lumber to the mills.
- 6) FJRA restores forest while protecting communities from fire.
- 7) FJRA preserves our outdoor heritage.
- 8) FJRA is the only realist option to resolve 25 years of bitter, acrimonious debate and law suits.
- 9) FJRA is fair – a process is in places to defend against law suits by laying the ground work up front and preventing frivolous legal challenges later.
- 10) FJRA balances competing interests.

Now, I cannot imagine voting HR 4 up or down if I had not read the full text of FJRA. I'd like to request someone on the Committee to ask the Chairman for a roll call of who on the Committee has read the complete text of FJRA.

I mentioned Easter week, and it made me think about Jesus beginning his ministry by spending 40 days in the Wilderness. Note, the Bible did not say he began it by the riding the back roads on his ATD, that is all-terrain donkey. Why Wilderness? If you don't know, go. I've spent my 40+ days in the Wilderness. As you know, most of humankind's spiritual traditions have a "getting started" story that begins in wilderness. Why? Being in Wilderness is a life changing experience. And by the way, Montana after two hundred years of European settlement, has only have 3.7% of lands congressionally appointed as Wilderness—mostly all in Western Montana; as if Eastern Montana, God's Country, doesn't count – it does. Eastern Montana keeps its secrets. The remaining 6.9% of roadless lands include Glacier and Yellowstone Parks. That's 10.6% total. That is all. No one is creating more Wilderness. It cannot be created, only recognized.

One week ago today, in his first homily, Pope Francis said, "Please, I would like to ask all those who have positions of responsibility in economic, political and social life, and all men and women of goodwill: let us be "protectors" of creation, protectors of God's plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment." I naturally thought of the Forest Jobs and Recreation Act. Enemies came together, worked together, stood together, and become partners and friends in crafting FJRA. It was an open process. There were years of hearings. Who is saying they were shut out? Who? These discussions have been going on for years. The legislation has been out there to review, comment, and amend. Did these people not have a phone? Could they not write, visit, or in any

other way reach out to break the stalemate? It took me exactly 30 seconds to sign up for an e-mail list to be notified of FJRA meetings, and I went. I participated.

In closing, I want to share an image and four-line Agriculture parable. Imagine when, between Helena and Butte, the pine trees were green, fresh, and marketable. That was when FJRA was introduced – the trees were still green. Here's the parable. A forester grew millions of acres of trees and before the eyes of the homeless, burnt them. A rancher raised the largest herd of cattle Montana has ever seen and before the eyes of the hungry, he denied the cattle water and grass, and the cattle died. Now I ask you, "Did the forester want to burn his forest? Did the rancher want to see his cattle die of thirst and hunger?" No. They did not; no one does! How did it happen? It happened in committee. It happened by delay. Perhaps it was this committee. Perhaps it is today. I hope not. This evening, when you go out of the Capital building, look south and imagine the hills on fire. When that fire rages across the south hills, as it surely will, think back on this moment, what you did or failed to do. With prosperity with our grasp, we should not be afraid to reach together. We can protect communities from fire, we can put people to work, we can put millions of board feet into a growing lumber market, and we can protect the most precious place on earth, our Montana. Support FJRA, table HR 4.

Thank you.

===== FOR THE COMMITTEE ONLY =====

Years ago, when my daughter was young, if she did not get what she wanted from one parent, she asked the other. My wife and I agreed to talk before consenting to any of her requests, as her tactics were clearly manipulative. She grew out of that quick.

About the process of HR 4, I thought we – the legislative body and the proponents and opponents -- had our day when we discussed HJ 8. However, it seems a Representative White successfully manipulated this hearing. I'm sorry for the Agriculture Committee's sake. For the record, I want to stand in support of this committee because:

- 1) I do not think you mean to disrespect the judgment of your fellow members of the House by hearing a bill they tabled in committee.
- 2) I do not think you want the Agriculture Committee to be the dumping ground or clearing house for failed motions.
- 3) I do not believe the majority here are contemptuous of Montana voters who as a majority re-elect the Senator Tester after he made FJRA a central piece of his legislative agenda and furthermore campaign on it. The Montanan voters decided FJRA in November.

- 4) Finally, I do not think the Agriculture Committee intends to stand in the way of job growth or undermine its support of Montana Agriculture at a national level. Please ask the sponsor, Rep. White, how moving HR 4 from the Agriculture Committee to the floor of the House will benefit Agriculture in Montana. I would if you support this action you will needlessly alienate the US Senate's only working farmer and its most powerful rancher. What is your political strategy by doing going forward with HR 4? If this committee truly has problems with FJRA, give Senator Tester a call for heaven's sake and work it out when you can. Practically speaking, if I were you, I would support FJRA and let Montana know of your support and then ask for Senator Tester's support for what you want, when you really need it.

In short, send the message to your fellow representatives to stop passing the buck and stop wasting time. Table HR 4.